

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 are pending, claims 10-13 have been withdrawn as being non-elected inventions. Claim 1 is the only independent claim. Claims 1-4 are rejected.

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are under consideration; Claims 1-4 are rejected and Claims 5-9 are objected. Applicant has amended Claim 1, canceled Claim 8 and has added new Claims 14 -17. No new matter has been added by these amendments. Support for such amendments can be found throughout the specification and especially in the original claims.

Rejection of Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Hunig (WO 98/54225) as evidenced by Hunig (US Patent No. 6,987,171) (collectively referred to herein as “Hunig” reference). Applicant respectfully disagrees.

In order to further prosecution of the application on the merits, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to include the diameter of the support structure in order to more clarify the support structure used in this invention. Therefore, based upon this amendment set forth above, Applicant has overcome this rejection and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn and placed in condition for allowance.

Objection of claims 5-9

Claims 5-9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As above, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to more clarify the support structure used in the invention, resulting in Claims 2 through 7 and 9 depending from this newly amended Claim 1. Furthermore, and as suggested by the Office, Applicant has added new Claims 14 through 17 in independent form, which includes the limitations of the original base Claim 1.

Therefore, based upon this amendment, Applicant has over this objection and respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn and placed in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing Amendments and remarks, it is believed that the rejections of record have been obviated, and allowance of this application is respectfully solicited. If a telephone conference would facilitate examination of this application in any way, the examiner is invited to contact the applicant's attorney at (619) 846-4850. The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,

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